**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing Of Claims**:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A central office switch for monitoring a call forwarded to a network-based voice mail system (VMS), comprising:

means for receiving a call directed to a called party ~~number~~;

if the call is not answered, means for forwarding the call to the VMS;

after the call is forwarded to the VMS, means for determining if the call was forwarded prior to being forwarded to the VMS;

if the call was not forwarded prior to being forwarded to the VMS, means for receiving a call monitoring provisioned signal from the VMS, wherein the call monitoring provisioned signal indicates that call monitoring is allowed; ~~and~~

in response to receiving the call monitoring provisioned signal, means for sending an activate call monitoring data message and a call monitoring alert signal to ~~the CPE~~ customer premises equipment (CPE) associated with the called party to alert the called party that call monitoring is available; and

if the call was forwarded prior to being forwarded to the VMS, means for denying call monitoring.

2. (Currently Amended) The central office switch of Claim 1, wherein the VMS is operative to:

determine if a calling party exits the ~~called party's voice mailbox~~ the VMS; and if the calling party exits the ~~called party's voice mailbox~~ VMS, then send a ~~deny all~~ deny call monitoring signal to the central office switch.

3. (Previously Presented) The central office switch of Claim 1, wherein the call monitoring provisioned signal is a start of greeting signal sent by the VMS when the VMS plays a called party's voice mail greeting.

4. (Previously Presented) The central office switch of Claim 1, wherein the call monitoring provisioned signal is an end of greeting signal sent by the VMS upon the completion of a called party's voice mail greeting.

5. (Previously Presented) The central office switch of Claim 4, wherein the end of greeting signal also acts as a record message indicator.

6. (Currently Amended) The central office switch of Claim 1, wherein the ~~called party number is associated with customer premises equipment (CPE)~~ CPE associated with the called party is operative to generate an alert to ~~a called~~ the called party in response to receiving the call monitoring alert signal ~~from the central office switch~~.

7. (Currently Amended) The central office switch of Claim 6, wherein the alert comprises a distinctive sound generated by the CPE associated with the called party ~~number~~.

8. (Currently Amended) The central office switch of Claim 6, wherein the alert comprises a visual indicator on the CPE associated with the called party ~~number~~.

9. (Currently Amended) The central office switch of Claim 1, wherein the CPE associated with the called party ~~number~~ is operative to go off-hook and to activate a speaker assembly in response to receiving the activate call monitoring data message.

10. (Currently Amended) The central office switch of Claim 9, wherein the CPE associated with the called party ~~number~~ is operative to send an on-hook signal to a second CPE and an intercept tone to the central office switch, if the CPE associated with the called party number receives an intercept indicator, further comprising:

the second CPE connected to the central office switch and the CPE associated with the called party ~~number~~, the second CPE operative to go on-hook in response to receiving the on-hook signal.

11. (Previously Presented) The central office switch of Claim 10, wherein the intercept tone is a Dual-Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) signal.

12. (Previously Presented) The central office switch of Claim 10, wherein one signal has the dual function of indicating on-hook to the second CPE and indicating interception to the central office switch.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for monitoring a call forwarded to a network based voice mail system comprising:

receiving a call from a calling party directed to a ~~called~~ telephone number associated with a called party;

if the call is not answered, then forwarding the call to the voice mail system;

after forwarding the call to the voice mail system, determining whether the call ~~can be monitored~~ was forwarded prior to being forwarded to the voice mail system;

if the call ~~can be monitored~~ was not forwarded prior to being forwarded to the voice mail system, then sending a call monitoring alert signal and an activate call monitoring message to customer premises equipment (CPE) associated ~~with a~~ with the called party to alert the called party that call monitoring is available; and

~~receiving an intercept tone from the CPE; and~~

~~causing the called party to be connected to a calling party~~

if the call was forwarded prior to being forwarded to the voice mail system, then denying call monitoring.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13, further comprising:

detecting a voice mail code sent by the called party; and

acting on the voice mail code.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the voice mail code is a Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) sequence.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 13, ~~wherein determining if the call can be monitored comprises~~ further comprising:

after sending a call monitoring alert signal and an activate call monitoring message, connecting the voice mail system with the CPE associated with the called party to allow call monitoring;

after connecting the voice mail system with the CPE associated with the called party, receiving an intercept tone from the CPE; and

in response to receiving the intercept tone, causing the CPE associated with the called party to be connected to the calling party

~~determining if the call was forwarded prior to being received as a forwarded call; and~~

~~if the call was previously forwarded, then to deny call monitoring~~.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~Claim 13~~ Claim 16, wherein the intercept tone is a Dual Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) tone.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for monitoring a call forwarded to a network based voice mail system (VMS) comprising:

receiving a call from a calling party directed to a called party ~~number~~;

if the call is not answered, then forwarding the call to the VMS;

after forwarding the call to the VMS, receiving a call monitoring provisioned signal from the VMS indicating that call monitoring is allowed; and

in response to receiving the call monitoring provisioned signal from the ~~VMS:~~ VMS; sending a call monitoring alert signal and ~~sending~~ an activate call monitoring data message ~~indicating that call monitoring is available~~ to customer premises equipment (CPE) associated with the called party ~~number~~, wherein the call monitoring alert signal and the activate call monitoring data message alert the called party that call monitoring is available; ~~and~~

connecting the VMS to the CPE associated with the called party to allow call monitoring;

after connecting the VMS to the CPE associated with the called party to allow call monitoring, receiving an indication to intercept the call, wherein the indication to intercept the call indicates whether the VMS should be disconnected once the call is intercepted; and

in response to receiving the indication to intercept the call;

connecting the calling party and the CPE associated with the called party, and

maintaining a connection with the VMS or disconnecting the VMS based on the indication to intercept the call.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 18, wherein the provisioned signal is a start of greeting signal received from the VMS when the VMS plays a called party's voice mail greeting.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 18, wherein the provisioned signal is an end of greeting signal received from the VMS upon the completion of a called party's voice mail greeting.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the call monitoring alert signal is a distinctive ring pattern.

22-23 (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~Claim 23~~ Claim 18, wherein the ~~intercept signal~~ indication to intercept the call is a DTMF signal.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) A method for monitoring a call forwarded to a network based voice mail system (VMS) comprising:

receiving a call at a voice mailbox of the VMS associated with a called party number, wherein the call is forwarded from a central office switch to the voice mailbox of the VMS ~~forwarded to a voice mailbox of the VMS associated with a called party number from a central office switch~~;

playing a voice message greeting associated with the called party number;

when the voice message greeting begins playing, sending a start of greeting signal from the VMS to the central office switch so that call monitoring is allowed if the

central office switch is provisioned to begin call monitoring upon receipt of the start of greeting signal; and

sending an end of greeting signal upon completion of the voice message greeting from the VMS to the central office switch so that call monitoring is allowed if the central office switch is provisioned to begin call monitoring upon receipt of the end of greeting signal.

27. (Original) The method of Claim 26, further comprising:

receiving a voice mail code associated with a voice mail function; and

in response to receiving the voice mail code, performing the voice mail function.

28. (Original) The method of Claim 27, wherein the voice mail code comprises a Dual Tone Multi Function (DTMF) signal.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 26, further comprising:

determining if a calling party exits the ~~called party's~~ voice mailbox associated with the called party number; and

if the calling party exits the ~~called party's~~ voice mailbox associated with the called party number, then sending a deny call monitoring signal to the central office switch.

30. (Proposed Amendment) A method for monitoring a call forwarded to a network based voice mail system comprising:

receiving a call directed to a called party ~~number~~ at customer premises equipment (CPE) associated with the called party;

if the call is not answered, then receiving a call monitoring alert signal from a central office switch (CO) at the CPE;

in response to receiving the call monitoring alert signal, providing an alert to a called party that call monitoring is available;

receiving an activate call monitoring data message from the CO at the CPE; and

in response to receiving the activate call monitoring data message, providing call monitoring to the called party, wherein the CPE automatically goes ~~going~~ off-hook and ~~engaging~~ engages a speaker assembly to provide call monitoring to the called party ~~monitor the call~~.

31. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein providing an alert comprises generating a sound.

32. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein providing an alert comprises providing a distinctive ring pattern.

33. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein providing an alert comprises providing a visual indicator.

34. (Original) The method of Claim 30, further comprising:

receiving an intercept indicator; and

in response to receiving the intercept indicator, sending an intercept signal to the CO.

35. (Original) The method of Claim 34, wherein the intercept signal comprises a DTMF signal.

36. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 34, wherein the CPE and a plurality of other ~~customer premises equipment (CPE)~~ CPE adapted to support call monitoring ~~is connected~~ are connected to ~~the called party's line~~ a line associated with the called party, further comprising:

receiving an intercept indicator at the CPE; and

in response to receiving the intercept indicator at the CPE, sending an intercept signal to the CO and sending an on-hook signal to ~~all~~ the plurality of other ~~CPEs~~ CPE.

37. (Original) The method of Claim 36, wherein the intercept signal and the on-hook signal are the same signal.

38. (Original) The method of Claim 30, further comprising:

receiving a voice mail code; and

sending the voice mail code to the VMS.

39. (New) A method for monitoring a call forwarded to a network based voice mail system (VMS) comprising:

receiving a call from a calling party directed to a called party;

if the call is not answered, then forwarding the call to the VMS to allow the calling party to leave a voice mail message;

after forwarding the call to the VMS, receiving a call monitoring provisioned signal from the VMS indicating that call monitoring is allowed; and

in response to receiving the call monitoring provisioned signal from the VMS, sending an alert signal to customer premises equipment (CPE) associated with the called party, wherein the alert signal alerts the called party that call monitoring is available;

connecting the VMS to the CPE associated with the called party to allow call monitoring;

after connecting the VMS to the CPE associated with the called party to

allow call monitoring, receiving an indication to intercept the call by connecting the calling party and the CPE associated with the called party and disconnecting the VMS;

prior to disconnecting the VMS, receiving a voice mail code, wherein the

voice mail code indicates whether the voice mail message left by the calling party should be saved or erased;

connecting the calling party and the CPE associated with the called party;

and

saving or erasing the voice mail message left by the calling party based on the received voice mail code.